

# The Curious Case of the Absent Heirs

This is the first Arc in the Five Part Incursion known as: Into the Ring. Here the Storyteller will take the rookie Psychonauts through their first jaunt into the Depths of the Shadowlands. They will seek out the Key to the Foglands and discover that the process of obtaining the Key is much more complicated than they were previously led to believe.

# Synopsis

## Hook

*The Hook is the Mystery that serve as a through line for the whole five part Incursion*

The Psychonauts are introduced to the fact that the Missing Prince and Princess are driving the plot of the Story.

## Path

*The Path is the Mythic Story from the Tales of the Blood Red Dreaming that this Incursion will reveal and elaborate*

The Path for this Incursion is: The Flight from Glass Tower. The Psychonauts have been given no information regarding the Path by the instructor. In the first Session the Psychonauts will learn that the Last Princes and the Crown Prince have been discovered missing from the Glass Tower and the Men of Black and White have been sent out to Search for them.

## Plot

*The Plot is the Plot*

The Psychonauts are sent to the Ring to obtain the Key to the Foglands, but the key is missing from its place. And they must find a clue to its whereabouts before the Men of Black and White capture them or worse.

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# Ultra Simple Overview

This is meant to give the Storyteller a bird's eye view of the Incursion and how the story should flow.

## Setup

The Psychonuats receive their first field assignment from their Mentor and Instructor in the ways of the Psychonaut: obtain the Key to the Foglands. Located in the Ring- a liminal realm at the upper edge of the Depths of the Shadowlands- the Key to the Foglands will enable the Psychonauts to venture deeper still into the Shadowlands.

## Act 1

Psychonauts meet the Cosmonaut dogs who ask for help. Psychonauts need to know the location of the key. The Dogs provide this.

## Act 2

The Key is not where it should be, and the evidence suggests that the people who stole the dogs' home have the key.

## Act 3

The Psychonauts (willingly or not) confront the Men of Black and White in the Dogs' home and a final showdown ensues.

## Resolution

The Dogs regain their home. The Key is not present, but evidence suggests that a Psychonaut named Bobby Indra has the Key and the Dogs indicate he is still trapped in the Ring.

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## The Deck of Fire: Cards Scene by Scene

<b>Act 1 Scene 1</b>	<b>Mythos:</b> Cosmonaut Dogs <b>Scenario:</b> A Plea for Help	<b>Challenge:</b> Void Gnomon, New Mask Voidlings <b>Challenge:</b> Water Bears, Blossoming Spores	<b>Major:</b> The Threshold <b>Minor:</b> The Windswept Arena
<b>Act 2 Scene 2</b>	<b>Mythos:</b> The Men of Black and White <b>Scenario:</b> A Mystery Unfolds	<b>Challenge:</b> Ghost Lotus, The Bloom <b>Challenge:</b> Inquisitors, Investigation Team	<b>Major:</b> The Lotus Garden <b>Minor:</b> The Maze
<b>Act 2 Scene 3</b>	<b>Mythos:</b> The Men of Black and White <b>Scenario:</b> The MacGuffin is Missing!	<b>Challenge:</b> Water Bears, Blossoming Spores <b>Challenge:</b> Void Gnomon, New Mask Voidlings	<b>Major:</b> The Lotus Garden <b>Minor:</b> The Guide Room
<b>Act 2 Scene 4</b>	<b>Mythos:</b> The Men of Black and White <b>Scenario:</b> A Mystery Unfolds	<b>Challenge:</b> Hunters, Pursuit Team <b>Challenge:</b> Ghost Lotus, The Bloom	<b>Major:</b> The Lotus Garden <b>Minor:</b> The Maze
<b>Act 3 Scene 5</b>	<b>Mythos:</b> Cosmonaut Dogs <b>Scenario:</b> A Plea for Help	<b>Challenge:</b> The Purifiers, Purge Team <b>Challenge:</b> Void Gnomon, New Mask Voidlings	<b>Major:</b> Void House <b>Minor:</b> The Atrium
<b>Act 3 Scene 6</b>	<b>Mythos:</b> Brewmaster Bobby Indra <b>Scenario:</b> The MacGuffin is Missing!	<b>Challenge:</b> The Purifiers, Purge Team <b>Challenge:</b> Ghost Lotus, The Bloom	<b>Major:</b> Void House <b>Minor:</b> The First Capsule

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# Storyteller Stage Notes

## Set Up

As a Storyteller you will need to have the appropriate Deck of Fire, a Deck of Void, and a copy of both the Incursion and the Rules of Play at a minimum. You should also have a Campaign Book in which to keep notes, Incursion Sheets for the Psychonauts, a Story Progression Sheet, a Quick Reference Guide and pencils and tokens- all of which will make running the Incursions much more manageable, but which are not strictly necessary (just strongly recommended)

### Needed Materials

- Deck of Void: the Ugly Deck is available free as a printable download online
- The Incursion Session: The Incursion Book is available free as a printable download online
- The Incursion Deck of Fire: the Ugly Deck is available free as a printable download online
- The Campaign Book: You make this yourself. Either a physical book or an online document or some sort. You will need it.
- Incursion Sheets for the Psychonauts: These are available free as a printable downloads online
- The Story Progression Sheet: available free as a printable download online
- The Quick Reference Guide: available free as a printable download online
- Pencils and some tokens as well.

## Set Up Itemized

1. First, read through the **Incursion Session for the part of the Incursion that you will telling** thoroughly. This walkthrough exists so that if you don't have time to do the reading ahead of time, you won't be out of luck, but we really do strongly recommend that you read things ahead of time. We recommend that you don't read ahead if other people will be acting as the Storyteller for later parts of the Incursion. As that would spoil the fun a bit.
2. Now reach out to the people who are going to be the **Psychonauts** in your Incursion. The **Storyteller** shouldn't be required to do everything, but you will find that you have to do more than others for some reason. Start by recommending two separate dates for the Incursion, as including hard dates in the invite will make it easier for people to visualize the event in their mind. You can always offer a

third date if not enough people can make either of the first two suggestions. You want between three and five Psychonauts generally. Two is pretty much the absolute minimum, and over six the game starts to become wildly unbalanced.

3. Next collect the books and cards. This may be as simple as pulling them off a shelf, or as complex as buying them online. For most people playing for the first time, we recommend printing off from our download section whatever needs a physical presence: **the Deck of Void** and **Deck of Fire**, the **Incursion Sheets**, the **Story Progression Sheet**, and a **Quick Reference Guide**. For the **Incursion Session**, we generally recommend you leave in digital form and read it from your phone or tablet or laptop unless you really prefer a dead tree version. We have put this walkthrough version in landscape format to help it display on a laptop more easily.
4. Next, assemble the generic materials. If your group already has a **Campaign Book**, grab that. If not, you'll want to designate an empty notebook as the **Campaign Book**. We strongly recommend you use a dedicated book, rather than trying to keep track of multiple books or stray papers with scribbled notes. And while you're doing that, grab some **pencils** (not pens, they need to be able to erase stuff). Also, grab some **tokens**. They can be those decorative glass beads people put in vases, or poker chips, pieces from your game of Risk nobody ever plays anymore since that eight hour game that ended with your friends getting divorced.
5. The day of the Incursion, set up a play area, typically a table with enough seats for all to be comfortable. You can also use the comfy seats of a living room area, just be sure to have trays for the Psychonauts to keep their papers, and a separate table or coffee table to display the Progression Sheet where all can see.
6. Organize the Deck of Fire so that the cards you will need are in easy reach and easy order. Remember that some cards will be used more than once in the course of the Incursion Session.
7. Have the Psychonnauts fill out their Incursion Sheets, and deal out each psychonaut a full hand of five cards from the Deck of Void
8. Provide tokens for the psychonauts to use on their Incursion Sheets to mark the status of their Auras.
9. Set a token on the first scene marker shown on the Story Progression Sheet
10. **Start Play by turning to the Next Section of this Walkthrough and following the directions provided**

**Hint: Your goal, as Storyteller, is to tell a good story- one which challenges the psychonauts.** The challenge should be sufficient that **if they make poor choices or suffer bad luck, they will experience setbacks and loss. And that if they do so repeatedly, they will fail.** Without opposition and challenge, a story is not fun or exciting. But you should strive to make things fun, and not be a bully. Your goal is not to defeat the psychonauts, your goal is to challenge them.

## Act One - The Bazaar

**The Goal of Act One is to get the Psychonauts motivated and moving.** The Storyteller will achieve this by presenting a **clear goal**, presenting a **path to that goal**, and then **putting obstacles in the way of that path** which the Psychonauts must overcome. At the same time, the Storyteller will **put threats behind the Psychonauts** to force them move forward, propelling them through the Story.

The Storyteller Opening Narration at the beginning of each scene will help provide this for you. But after you have provided that opening narration, the Psychonauts will start making their plans and spoiling all of your plans in the process.

**HINT:** A Storyteller should never simply ask: “*What do you want to do?*” with no added context. Instead, the Storyteller should frame any question about the Psychonaut’s strategy or planned actions by adding immediate context. For example: “*The Hound is howling quite close behind you and its howls are getting closer. You can see the Towers of Stellar House off to your left. And blocking the way is a Purge Team with Flamethrowers, but they haven’t seen you yet. You don’t have much time before the hound closes in, or the Purge Team spots you. What do you do?*”

## The Arc Cycle

After the Storyteller has provided the Opening Narration, the psychonauts will develop their plan. **Unlike other TableTop RPGs, the psychonauts will not attempt each step of their plan in turn, determining success or failure for each step separately.** This is one of the features of traditional TableTop RPGs which causes them to be so time consuming. So psychonauts will not try- for instance- to climb the wall as a discrete action, and then leap on top of the enemy as a discrete action, and then disarm the enemy (assuming both the climb and the leap were successful). **Instead, the Psychonauts will announce their whole plan-** for example- to have one of their number climb the wall and leap on the enemy and disarm them, while the others act as a distraction. The Storyteller will then run the **ARC Cycle (following the Quick Reference Guide)** and narrate who closely the events match the psychonaut’s initial plan.

**Since this is likely the first Incursion the Psychonauts will have every played, take time to walk them through the ARC Cycle slowly, and let them get comfortable with it.**

## Scene 1 - The Call

### Deck of Fire

**Set out the following cards from the Deck of Fire onto the Story Progression Sheet:**

- **Mythos:** Cosmonaut Dogs
- **Scenario:** A Plea for Help
- **Major Challenge:** Void Gnomon, New Mask Voidlings
- **Minor Challenge:** Water Bears, Blossoming Spores
- **Major Setting:** The Threshold
- **Minor Setting:** The Windswept Arena

### Storyteller Opening Narration

**Start the Scene by reading (or paraphrasing) the following:**

*The summoning paper crackles with electricity and suddenly your avatar is standing somewhere else. Your body is sitting here, listening to the story, but you can feel your avatar projected down deep into the story realms.*

*You stand on the stones of the Windswept Arena staring through a stone archway into the Ring. The wind howls around and stings the face of your avatar. In the distance you can see three great spires in the distance, one to the far left, one to the far right and one directly in front of you.*

*Ahead, you notice a trio of four legged forms wearing archaic spacesuits. You realize that they are domestic dogs, wearing space suits with the hammer and sickle of the Soviet Union. One of the dogs approaches cautiously, tail wagging slowly.*



*"You are Psychonauts, yes? Because we three are needing the aid of somebody brave and good. Our home has been taken and we are driven out. Please help us."*

## Stage Direction

**The Major Challenge which the psychonauts must overcome is the Void Gnomon, who are not malicious just dangerous by their nature.** They move by creating bubbles of gravity which can easily trip or pull or push bystanders in dangerous and potentially fatal ways. A victim could end up drifting into deep space.

**The Water Bears serve as the Minor Challenge. They are small and are dangerous if inhaled, as they can cause coughing or choking.** Psychonauts may end up inhaling them accidentally while attempting to avoid the Void Gnomon.

The Psychonauts may attempt to invoke the Water Bears on their behalf in some way. This is to be encouraged. Most obvious, they may attempt to waft the Water Bears toward the Void Gnomon. The Void Gnomon are also vulnerable to inhaling the Water Bears and this can force them to back away or force them to stop and cough or choke depending on the results of the ARC Cycle. No doubt the Psychonauts will come up with other more surprising options, be ready for them.

Use the following as a guide for answering questions and guiding the Psychonauts as they plan out their actions for the scene:

*You've arrived in the Ring, the highest level of the Depths and gateway to the rest of the Shadowlands. You've been tasked by your mentor with obtaining the Key to the Foglands, and you can't continue your training or journey deeper into the Shadowlands until you obtain it.*

*The Windswept Arena is overrun with Void Gnomes dancing through the air, playing with gravity as they do and pushing around Water Bear Spores in the the process. Whatever you plan to do will require getting through both the Gnomes and the Spores.*

As this is the first scene, don't let them get too bogged down. If the psychonauts seem to be mired in discussion, set a timer for five minutes with an audible alert and when the timer sounds, ask the psychonauts what they are going to do.

### Challenge and Consequence

The Cards will include a base recommended difficulty Level. As Storyteller, you choose how much to add to that difficulty (or potentially remove) for each scene based upon the previous events of the story and the notes provided here for the scene itself. Once you have decided on what the difficulty score should be, write down that number and place it face down. Then tell the psychonauts into what range the difficulty falls; possible, impossible, or beyond the impossible. The card does not include a recommended consequence level, you will choose that using the recommendations here based on where you are in the Story.

**The First Scene should have a fairly low challenge and minimal consequences, and should also not be overly taxing.** As this is the first ARC Cycle most Psychonauts will ever run, the Storyteller is encouraged to add no more than a point or two to the difficulty score above the base. And provide Mild or Ugly consequences at the most. **Get them moving, don't stop them cold.**

### Lead the Psychonauts to Action

**Take the Following steps to get from the Narration scripts above to the action in the Scene: The ARC Cycle**

1. The Conflict presented in the Storyteller Opening Narration
2. Explain the base difficulty ranges on the Deck of Fire Cards in play
3. Set a timer for ten minutes
4. Let psychonauts debate
5. Tell potential outcomes if plans succeed or fail. And give Challenge and Consequence Levels for each (no numbers, just the terms)
6. Timer goes off
7. Ask for the Psychonaut's plan
8. If still indecisive, ask who is the lead actor. Then ask the Lead Actor what they will do.
9. Start ARC cycle
10. Resolve ARC
11. Magician's choice on how to exit scene. Three options on how they may conclude the scen that all lead to next scene more or less

## The ARC Cycle

Once the Psychonauts have decided on a course of action, run the ARC Cycle and resolve the conflict. Remember that only one psychonaut can be the lead actor, but any number of psychonauts can support the lead's actions. Likewise, if the actions are successful, only the lead actor recovers cards to their hand. As the ARC cycle covers a much broader segment of action than a single dice roll in a traditional RPG, the storyteller should be flexible in allowing the psychonauts to modify their plan as the ARC Cycle proceeds. The mechanics exist to serve the story, not the other way around. The Storyteller should always act to produce the best story.

If the psychonauts succeed, they will recover some cards for their hand. If the Psychonauts fail, some of them will take some damage to their auras and no cards will be recovered. Assuming that some of the psychonauts have survived, you will narrate how their actions unfolded. And, whether or not they were successful in their attempted actions, they will move closer to the final confrontation.

If they succeeded, feel free to provide some small in game benefit, or even simply provide a narration which makes them look good. If they fail, do not penalize them, they will already have suffered damage to their aura and will have lost cards without being allowed to draw new ones. Instead, if they fail, simply explain how they have been dragged by the plot closer to the story's conclusion in a manner they would not have preferred. From the plot's point of view, knocking out the guards and sneaking into the castle disguised as said guards accomplishes the same thing as being dragged into the castle in chains, but one feels very different to the psychonauts.

### Storyteller Transition Direction

Once the ARC Cycle has completed, your job as the Storyteller is to move them smoothly to the next scene. We have provided a generic transition narration below. **We recommend that you do not read the transition simply as written, but include it as part of your narration explaining how the results of the ARC Cycle unfolded as part of the story.**

*So your ultimate goal is the Key to the Foglands. The Cosmonaut dogs have asked for your help, and have offered to help you no strings attached either way. The Men of Black and White are about in the Ring and will likely not appreciate Psychonauts snooping around.*

*You've outdistanced the Void Gnomes, but ahead of you is the Maze, with the Blooming Ghost Lotus and the Men of Black and White. What is your plan?*

## Act Two - The Pursuit

**The purpose of Act Two is to propel the psychonauts forward with progressively rising action.** To use a movie example. In Star Wars: A New Hope, act one is Tatooine and act three is the Death Star trench run, while act two is the escape from the Death Star by deactivating the tractor beam and rescuing Princess Leia. Act Two is the complication between the psychonauts and their goal.

Act Two has the most scenes of the bunch: three. The goal here is to increase the stakes and the challenge steadily. The Difficulty of the challenges here should rise from scene to scene. In fact, Act Two should have higher difficulty than Act one or Act Three. Just be sure to keep the consequence levels to where failure of one scene is still survivable. If they psychonauts fail, we ideally want them to fail in Act Three, and not Act Two.

**HINT:** An easy way to prompt the psychonauts to decide on a plan is to ask who is going to be the lead actor in a particular scene. This can prompt the team to decide more quickly. As the psychonauts will have different aura status and different amounts of cards in their hands of differing values, there may be only one clear choice for lead actor in a given scene. And whoever is the lead actor will obviously have final say on what they are doing.

If the psychonauts decide on a lead actor, but still continue to debate with no apparent end in sight, a Storyteller can simply ask the lead actor point blank, "You're lead actor, this is your decision. What are you going to do?"

The game has six scenes, and is meant to last between one and three hours. Which means you want to spend no more than thirty minutes per scene. Setting a timer can help here. In general you want to keep the second act scenes shorter to keep the action moving. This also gives you more time for the finale. Don't cut a scene to less than ten minutes- although feel free to let the psychonauts burn through a scene quickly if they are feeling the momentum on their own.

## The Arc Cycle

After the Storyteller has provided the Opening Narration, the psychonauts will develop their plan. **Unlike other TableTop RPGs, the psychonauts will not attempt each step of their plan in turn, determining success or failure for each step separately.** This is one of the features of traditional TableTop RPGs which causes them to be so time consuming. So psychonauts will not try- for instance- to climb the wall

as a discrete action, and then leap on top of the enemy as a discrete action, and then disarm the enemy (assuming both the climb and the leap were successful). **Instead, the Psychonauts will announce their whole plan-** for example- to have one of their number climb the wall and leap on the enemy and disarm them, while the others act as a distraction. The Storyteller will then run the **ARC Cycle (following the Quick Reference Guide)** and narrate who closely the events match the psychonaut's initial plan.

**The ARC Cycle is fairly intuitive, and Psychonauts should already have a feel for it on the second act.** But feel free to back up and start an ARC Cycle over if psychonauts misunderstood something. Don't penalize inexperience, this is about having fun and telling a story, not being a pedantic rules lawyer. **Things will get much tense in Act Three if you do this even decently well, so give the psychonauts time to experiement and get comfortable in act two.**

## Scene 2 - The Threshold

### Deck of Fire

**Set out the following cards from the Deck of Fire onto the Story Progression Sheet:**

- **Mythos:** The Men of Black and White
- **Scenario:** A Mystery Unfolds
- **Major Challenge:** Ghost Lotus, The Bloom
- **Minor Challenge:** Inquisitors, Investigation Team
- **Major Setting:** The Lotus Garden
- **Minor Setting:** The Maze

### Storyteller Opening Narration

**Start the Scene by reading (or paraphrasing) the following:**

*You've left the windswept Threshold, crossing the empty bridge into the Lotus Garden- entering the Maze. The walls of the Maze are a mix of marble and crumbling sandstone, the whole place seems built out of the ruins of ancient civilizations. Moss and grass is growing on any available surface, and there is a whiff of pollen in the air. To your left and right you can see that you have drawn even with two of the three spires. The one to your left is supposedly Stellar House. One of the Cosmonaut Dogs whines nervously.*

*Ahead you see a mass of flowers floating in the air, drifting on the leftover breeze from the Threshold. And in the distance you can hear the chatter of voices speaking with tones that suggest soldiers or government agents, harsh and abrupt.*

## Stage Direction

**The Major Challenge is the Ghost Lotus, whose pollen puts victims into a slumbering stupor and drains their aura for nourishment.**

They drift aimlessly until one latches onto a victim, and then others are slowly drawn towards the captured victim as well. They are typically dangerous by dint of sheer numbers.

**The Inquisitors are the Minor Challenge, and this means that the Storyteller needs to emphasize that the Inquisitors are not confronting or hostile to the Psychonauts, merely suspicious.** The Psychonauts may invoke the Inquisitors for use against the Major Challenge in a number of ways, such as giving them a false lead that sends them ahead into a cloud of Ghost Lotus to as bait and a distraction. If the Psychonauts attempt to deal with the Inquisitors directly, simply add both challenge ratings together- and consider adding the major invocation difficulty for both.

The psychonauts find themselves in the Maze, and may well attempt to use that to their advantage (especially if gently reminded or encouraged).

*You've entered the Lotus Garden, the largest section of the Ring, and find yourself in the middle of the Maze that dominates the Garden. Somewhere in here is supposed to be the Key to the Foglands. The Maze is full of blooming Ghost Lotus, and the Men of Black and white, so be wary.*

## Challenge and Consequence

The Cards will include a base recommended difficulty Level. As Storyteller, you choose how much to add to that difficulty (or potentially remove) for each scene based upon the previous events of the story and the notes provided here for the scene itself. Once you have decided on what the difficulty score should be, write down that number and place it face down. Then tell the psychonauts into what range the difficulty falls; possible, impossible, or beyond the impossible. The card does not include a recommended consequence level, you will choose that using the recommendations here based on where you are in the Story.



**Act two should, in general have the highest difficulty levels in the Incursion Session, but only moderate consequence levels.** The goal here is to force the psychonauts to use up their hands, and take damage in order to move forward. As Storyteller, ideally you want them to reach Act Three. If they fall in Act Three, that is still a satisfying story (told right). But it is rarely much fun to lose in the second act.

The Deck of Void has cards with values between 0 and 4. Playing two cards puts the possible value between 2 and 8 then (because 0 is played against your randomly drawn card and are not laid down in the initial attempt) **The goal then is to have difficulty scores between 4 and 10.** This means that players will either need to lay three cards, or have other psychonauts support them with cards that cannot be replenished if they succeed. The goal here being to slowly sap the team's resources and force them to be creative and pragmatic in their tactics. Also, be on watch. **If the psychonauts do not invoke the Minor Challenge, remind them of this, and then use it against them if they still do not invoke or if their invocation is not convincing** (tell them if you are not accepting their invocation). If they can't think of a compelling way to invoke the Inquisitors in their plan, **remind them that any of the other Deck of Fire cards can be invoked as well.** And that if they don't you might (But don't, this time).

**Consequence levels here should be Ugly or Disastrous, but rarely if ever Apocalyptic.** Should the psychonauts fail in the second act, you want them to be forced to take measures to push on. You don't them to fail outright here unless they really screw up.

**You, in your role as Storyteller, should directly point out and explain that the psychonauts can get free points against the challenge score by invoking the Minor Challenge or any other Deck of Fire Card in play for this scene** in their planned actions for the ARC cycle. Remind them that the Minor Challenge will always be invoked against them if they do not invoke it themselves.

Lead the Psychonauts to Action

**Take the Following steps to get from the Narration scripts above to the action in the Scene: The ARC Cycle**

12. The Conflict presented in the Storyteller Opening Narration
13. Explain the base difficulty ranges on the Deck of Fire Cards in play
14. Set a timer for ten minutes
15. Let psychonauts debate
16. Tell potential outcomes if plans succeed or fail. And give Challenge and Consequence Levels for each (no numbers, just the terms)
17. Timer goes off
18. Ask for the Psychonaut's plan

19. If still indecisive, ask who is the lead actor. Then ask the Lead Actor what they will do.
20. Start ARC cycle
21. Resolve ARC
22. Magician's choice on how to exit scene. Three options on how they may conclude the scene that all lead to next scene more or less

### The ARC Cycle

Once the Psychonauts have decided on a course of action, run the ARC Cycle and resolve the conflict. Remember that only one psychonaut can be the lead actor, but any number of psychonauts can support the lead's actions. Likewise, if the actions are successful, only the lead actor recovers cards to their hand. As the ARC cycle covers a much broader segment of action than a single dice roll in a traditional RPG, the storyteller should be flexible in allowing the psychonauts to modify their plan as the ARC Cycle proceeds. The mechanics exist to serve the story, not the other way around. The Storyteller should always act to produce the best story.

If the psychonauts succeed, they will recover some cards for their hand. If the Psychonauts fail, some of them will take some damage to their auras and no cards will be recovered. Assuming that some of the psychonauts have survived, you will narrate how their actions unfolded. And, whether or not they were successful in their attempted actions, they will move closer to the final confrontation.

If they succeeded, feel free to provide some small in game benefit, or even simply provide a narration which makes them look good. If they fail, do not penalize them, they will already have suffered damage to their aura and will have lost cards without being allowed to draw new ones. Instead, if they fail, simply explain how they have been dragged by the plot closer to the story's conclusion in a manner they would not have preferred. From the plot's point of view, knocking out the guards and sneaking into the castle disguised as said guards accomplishes the same thing as being dragged into the castle in chains, but one feels very different to the psychonauts.

### Storyteller Transition Narration

Once the ARC Cycle has completed, your job as the Storyteller is to move them smoothly to the next scene. We have provided a generic transition narration below. **We recommend that you do not read the transition simply as written, but include it as part of your narration explaining how the results of the ARC Cycle unfolded as part of the story.**

*You're heading deeper into the Lotus Garden, looking for the Key to the Foglands. Don't forget that the Cosmonaut Dogs still need help. So what are you doing?*

## Scene 3 - The Crossing

### Deck of Fire

**Set out the following cards from the Deck of Fire onto the Story Progression Sheet:**

- **Mythos:** The Men of Black and White
- **Scenario:** The MacGuffin is Missing!
- **Major Challenge:** Water Bears, Blossoming Spores
- **Minor Challenge:** Void Gnomon, New Mask Voidlings
- **Major Setting:** The Lotus Garden
- **Minor Setting:** The Guide Room

### Storyteller Opening Narration

**Start the Scene by reading (or paraphrasing) the following:**

*In the middle of the Maze, as the center of the Lotus Garden, the dogs lead you to the Guide Room. Out of place in the midst of fallen sandstone pillars, the Guide Room is a futuristic chrome and polymer pod of a room, with an circular iris door that dilates open as you approach.*

*The inside of the Gate Room gleams with chrome and light up display panels. There is a slightly lemony chemical clean smell as you step inside and the room hums with sounds of machines in the background. Ahead of you is what looks like a display case, empty. And beside the case is what looks like a stage with cameras under a glass floor.*

*The floor mounted cameras flash to life, and a holographic humanoid projection appears shimmering blue before you. But the movement and lights have stirred something and you notice a cluster of Water Bear spores pouring out from seems in the walls of the Room.*

## Stage Direction

**Here the Major Challenge are the Water Bears and the Minor Challenge are the Void Gnomon, in contrast with scene one.** The easiest way to explain this to the psychonauts is to emphasize that the room is thick with the floating spores, but only a few Void Gnomon are bouncing around. The Void Gnomon are a danger here because they make the drifting of the Water Bears unpredictable.

*You've arrived at the Guide Room, a room at the center of the Lotus Garden. You had been told the Key to the Foglands would be here, but the Guide Room is overrun with Water Bear Spores and even a few Void Gnomes.*

## Challenge and Consequence

The Cards will include a base recommended difficulty Level. As Storyteller, you choose how much to add to that difficulty (or potentially remove) for each scene based upon the previous events of the story and the notes provided here for the scene itself. Once you have decided on what the difficulty score should be, write down that number and place it face down. Then tell the psychonauts into what range the difficulty falls; possible, impossible, or beyond the impossible. The card does not include a recommended consequence level, you will choose that using the recommendations here based on where you are in the Story.

**Act two should, in general have the highest difficulty levels in the Incursion Session, but only moderate consequence levels.** The goal here is to force the psychonauts to use up their hands, and take damage in order to move forward. As Storyteller, ideally you want them to reach Act Three. If they fall in Act Three, that is still a satisfying story (told right). But it is rarely much fun to lose in the second act. In addition to the minor challenge, if the psychonauts do not invoke other cards from the active deck of fire cards, choose one and think of a way to invoke it against them. An alarm starts flashing on a panel in the Guide Room to distract them. A Void Gnomon bumps against a panel and closes a door at a dangerous time. Be creative. But get them thinking about the other cards.

The Deck of Void has cards with values between 0 and 4. Playing two cards puts the possible value between 2 and 8 then (because 0 is played against your randomly drawn card and are not laid down in the initial attempt) **The goal then is to have difficulty scores between 4 and 10.** This means that players will either need to lay three cards, or have other psychonauts support them with cards that cannot be replenished if they succeed. **The goal here being to slowly sap the team's resources and force them to be creative and pragmatic in their tactics. In**

**general The Crossing should have the highest difficulty rating in the Session. The psychonauts ought to have enough resources here to dig deep and succeed if they are clever, but hopefully at notable cost.** And if they fail, they should have the resources to pull through and continue.

**Consequence levels here should be Ugly or Disastrous, but rarely if ever Apocalyptic.** Should the psychonauts fail in the second act, you want them to be forced to take measures to push on. You don't them to fail outright here unless they really screw up.

Lead the Psychonauts to Action

**Take the Following steps to get from the Narration scripts above to the action in the Scene: The ARC Cycle**

23. The Conflict presented in the Storyteller Opening Narration
24. Explain the base difficulty ranges on the Deck of Fire Cards in play
25. Set a timer for ten minutes
26. Let psychonauts debate
27. Tell potential outcomes if plans succeed or fail. And give Challenge and Consequence Levels for each (no numbers, just the terms)
28. Timer goes off
29. Ask for the Psychonaut's plan
30. If still indecisive, ask who is the lead actor. Then ask the Lead Actor what they will do.
31. Start ARC cycle
32. Resolve ARC
33. Magician's choice on how to exit scene. Three options on how they may conclude the scen that all lead to next scene more or less

The ARC Cycle

Once the Psychonauts have decided on a course of action, run the ARC Cycle and resolve the conflict. Remember that only one psychonaut can be the lead actor, but any number of psychonauts can support the lead's actions. Likewise, if the actions are successful, only the lead actor recovers cards to their hand. As the ARC cycle covers a much broader segment of action than a single dice roll in a traditional RPG, the storyteller should be flexible in allowing the psychonauts to modify their plan as the ARC Cycle proceeds. The mechanics exist to serve the story, not the other way around. The Storyteller should always act to produce the best story.

If the psychonauts succeed, they will recover some cards for their hand. If the Psychonauts fail, some of them will take some damage to their auras and no cards will be recovered. Assuming that some of the psychonauts have survived, you will narrate how their actions unfolded. And, whether or not they were successful in their attempted actions, they will move closer to the final confrontation.

If they succeeded, feel free to provide some small in game benefit, or even simply provide a narration which makes them look good. If they fail, do not penalize them, they will already have suffered damage to their aura and will have lost cards without being allowed to draw new ones. Instead, if they fail, simply explain how they have been dragged by the plot closer to the story's conclusion in a manner they would not have preferred. From the plot's point of view, knocking out the guards and sneaking into the castle disguised as said guards accomplishes the same thing as being dragged into the castle in chains, but one feels very different to the psychonauts.

### Storyteller Transition Narration

Once the ARC Cycle has completed, your job as the Storyteller is to move them smoothly to the next scene. We have provided a generic transition narration below. **We recommend that you do not read the transition simply as written, but include it as part of your narration explaining how the results of the ARC Cycle unfolded as part of the story.**

*The Key to the Foglands was supposed to be here, but it's missing! So, you are in the center of the Ring, in the middle of the Maze, surrounded by ghost lotus and very aggravated Men of Black and White. But the Cosmonaut Dogs still need help, and you're out of other leads. What do you want to do?*



## Scene 4 - The Twist

### Deck of Fire

**Set out the following cards from the Deck of Fire onto the Story Progression Sheet:**

- **Mythos:** The Men of Black and White
- **Scenario:** A Mystery Unfolds
- **Major Challenge:** Hunters, Pursuit Team
- **Minor Challenge:** Ghost Lotus, The Bloom
- **Major Setting:** The Lotus Garden
- **Minor Setting:** The Maze

### Storyteller Opening Narration

**Start the Scene by reading (or paraphrasing) the following:**

*You have left the Guide Room and re-entered the Maze, but without the Key to the Foglands- which is not where it ought to be.*

*Back in the sandstone confines of the Maze, you see the spire marking Stellar House in the distance. You hear a gunshot, and then several more, and the crackle of radio static in the distance. A bloom of ghost lotus rises up behind you, white against the blackness of the sky.*

*You can hear the sounds of the Men in Black and White, speaking to each other via their earpieces, and you catch snatches of conversation across pillars and over walls. They are hunting for somebody, and the descriptions sound like you.*

## Stage Direction

**The Major Challenge here is a group of the Men of Black and White: a Hunter Pursuit Team.** Remember to give the psychonauts non combat suggestions, such as hiding, bluffing, talking their way out, bribery, or similar. They psychonauts are certainly allowed to take the violent route, but for many players, the ability to solve a challenge like this without violence will be a welcome change from many role-playing games.

**The secondary challenge are the Ghost Lotus, who are again dangerous to both the heroes and villains depending upon which group takes advantage and invokes them.** As Storyteller, if the psychonauts did not try this earlier, you should certainly hint or suggest that the psychonauts try something like that here.

**And obviously, back in the Maze, the psychonauts have the potential to use the Maze against their opponents.** Or to get lost themselves, if they forget to invoke it in their favor (and thus allow you to invoke it against them).

*You need to find the Key to the Foglands, but it wasn't in the Guide Room. The Cosmonaut Dogs think that the Men of Black and White might have it. So you've left the Guide Room. You're back in the Maze, and the Men of Black and White have a Hunter team out searching for something, and apparently you are part of that something.*

## Challenge and Consequence

The Cards will include a base recommended difficulty Level. As Storyteller, you choose how much to add to that difficulty (or potentially remove) for each scene based upon the previous events of the story and the notes provided here for the scene itself. Once you have decided on what the difficulty score should be, write down that number and place it face down. Then tell the psychonauts into what range the difficulty falls; possible, impossible, or beyond the impossible. The card does not include a recommended consequence level, you will choose that using the recommendations here based on where you are in the Story.

**Act two should, in general have the highest difficulty levels in the Incursion Session, but only moderate consequence levels.** The goal here is to force the psychonauts to use up their hands, and take damage in order to move forward. As Storyteller, ideally you want them to reach Act Three. If they fall in Act Three, that is still a satisfying story (told right). But it is rarely much fun to lose in the second act.

The Deck of Void has cards with values between 0 and 4. Playing two cards puts the possible value between 2 and 8 then (because 0 is played against your randomly drawn card and are not laid down in the initial attempt) **The goal then is to have difficulty scores between 4 and 10.** This means that players will either need to lay three cards, or have other psychonauts support them with cards that cannot be replenished if they succeed. The goal here being to slowly sap the team's resources and force them to be creative and pragmatic in their tactics.

**Consequence levels here should be Ugly or Disastrous, but rarely if ever Apocalyptic. If you do wish to use Apocalyptic Consequences, the twist is the place to do so.** And if failure looks certain, feel free to remind them of the possibility of a sacrifice play. We will be introducing that more formally in a later session, but feel free to draw attention to it here is necessary.

Lead the Psychonauts to Action

**Take the Following steps to get from the Narration scripts above to the action in the Scene: The ARC Cycle**

34. The Conflict presented in the Storyteller Opening Narration
35. Explain the base difficulty ranges on the Deck of Fire Cards in play
36. Set a timer for ten minutes
37. Let psychonauts debate
38. Tell potential outcomes if plans succeed or fail. And give Challenge and Consequence Levels for each (no numbers, just the terms)
39. Timer goes off
40. Ask for the Psychonaut's plan
41. If still indecisive, ask who is the lead actor. Then ask the Lead Actor what they will do.
42. Start ARC cycle
43. Resolve ARC
44. Magician's choice on how to exit scene. Three options on how they may conclude the scene that all lead to next scene more or less

The ARC Cycle

Once the Psychonauts have decided on a course of action, run the ARC Cycle and resolve the conflict. Remember that only one psychonaut can be the lead actor, but any number of psychonauts can support the lead's actions. Likewise, if the actions are successful, only the lead actor recovers cards to their hand. As the ARC cycle covers a much broader segment of action than a single dice roll in a traditional RPG, the storyteller should be flexible in allowing the psychonauts to modify their plan as the ARC Cycle proceeds. The mechanics exist to serve the story, not the other way around. The Storyteller should always act to produce the best story.

If the psychonauts succeed, they will recover some cards for their hand. If the Psychonauts fail, some of them will take some damage to their auras and no cards will be recovered. Assuming that some of the psychonauts have survived, you will narrate how their actions unfolded. And, whether or not they were successful in their attempted actions, they will move closer to the final confrontation.

If they succeeded, feel free to provide some small in game benefit, or even simply provide a narration which makes them look good. If they fail, do not penalize them, they will already have suffered damage to their aura and will have lost cards without being allowed to draw new ones. Instead, if they fail, simply explain how they have been dragged by the plot closer to the story's conclusion in a manner they would not have preferred. From the plot's point of view, knocking out the guards and sneaking into the castle disguised as said guards accomplishes the same thing as being dragged into the castle in chains, but one feels very different to the psychonauts.

### Storyteller Transition Narration

Once the ARC Cycle has completed, your job as the Storyteller is to move them smoothly to the next scene. We have provided a generic transition narration below. **We recommend that you do not read the transition simply as written, but include it as part of your narration explaining how the results of the ARC Cycle unfolded as part of the story.**

*You're still looking for the Key. It's going missing. The Men of Black and White are searching for the missing heirs to the Throne of the Hungry Empire, you're almost certainly suspects just by virtue of being nearby. The Cosmonaut Dogs home has been occupied, and the only people that might have the key are the Men of Black and White themselves. What do you plan to do about it?*

## Act Three - The Showdown

**Act Three is the big finish, the boss fight, the Death Star trench run, the battle with Gozer and the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man.** This Act has two scenes, to allow for a back and forth and to allow the psychonauts to potentially get knocked down in the first scene and recover for an awesome finale.

**The Difficulty levels here should be high, but not as high as Act two. But the consequence of failure should be higher, the consequence of failure for these final scenes should break auras if the psychonauts fail** and have no means of mitigating the consequence of that failure. If the psychonauts are going to fail, this is where we want them to fail- in epic confrontation with the final villain (or similar)

**HINT:** Players are likely to approach most conflicts from a violent viewpoint. Other role-playing games and video games will have taught them that. They are not required to deal with opposition in a violent or lethal manner, but they will likely be predisposed to do so. This can present a problem for the Storyteller. As many challenges show up more than once in an Incursion Session.

A Storyteller has three primary ways of dealing with this, two which are largely universal and one which only works in certain cases. The first strategy is to have the psychonauts achieve victory (or defeat) without killing the opponent. The gunshot wound is not lethal. The enemy is disarmed. The monsters are routed and forced to retreat. The second strategy is to have reinforcements. The Psychonauts kill the Purge Team, but hear in the earpiece of one of the corpses that backup is on the way. This sort of thing is best introduced upon victory, as it motivates the team to keep moving forward and makes them anticipate the return of the opponent later. The last option is the resurrection. Many denizens of the Shadowlands are eternal and immortal so long as their stories are told. Elders and Gods and the more powerful Fair Folk can typically not be killed, but only forced to dissipate. This option obviously is limited to those denizens where it makes sense.

## The Arc Cycle

After the Storyteller has provided the Opening Narration, the psychonauts will develop their plan. **Unlike other TableTop RPGs, the psychonauts will not attempt each step of their plan in turn, determining success or failure for each step separately.** This is one of the features of traditional TableTop RPGs which causes them to be so time consuming. So psychonauts will not try- for instance- to climb the wall as a discrete action, and then leap on top of the enemy as a discrete action, and then disarm the enemy (assuming both the climb and the leap

were successful). **Instead, the Psychonauts will announce their whole plan-** for example- to have one of their number climb the wall and leap on the enemy and disarm them, while the others act as a distraction. The Storyteller will then run the **ARC Cycle (following the Quick Reference Guide)** and narrate who closely the events match the psychonaut's initial plan.

## Scene 5 - The Ordeal

### Deck of Fire

**Set out the following cards from the Deck of Fire onto the Story Progression Sheet:**

- **Mythos:** Cosmonaut Dogs
- **Scenario:** A Plea for Help
- **Major Challenge:** The Purifiers, Purge Team
- **Minor Challenge:** Void Gnomon, New Mask Voidlings
- **Major Setting:** Stellar House
- **Minor Setting:** The Atrium

### Storyteller Opening Narration

**Start the Scene by reading (or paraphrasing) the following:**

*The bridge is behind you, and you enter the Stellar House home to the lady of Fire, the Cosmonaut Dogs- and at the moment, also the Men of Black and White.*

*You enter the Atrium, which looks like a cross between an observatory and a museum. The Men of Black and White have set of olive drab military tents and piled ammunition boxes everywhere. Radio antenna jut out from piles of wires and everywhere the sound of boots echo off stone and polished oak display cases.*

*The Men of Black and White have pretty comprehensively occupied the area, and you will have to deal with their Purge Teams if you continue to trespass. But they haven't managed to rid the area completely of void gnomon and they too could be a problem.*



## Stage Direction

**The Major Challenge is a Purifier Purge Team.** For Psychonauts seeking a non-violent solution, you should advise that the Purge Team wears full face gas masks and don't appear to speak- even to each other. Non-violent options still exist, but the difficulty on diplomatic solutions such as negotiation and bribery will be far higher than stealth options or simply running.

**The Minor Challenge are the Void Gnomon,** and everyone should be familiar with them by now. Throwing a void gnomon may well have become a time tested tactic by this point.

*You're in Stellar House, and the The Men of Black and White have made a field outpost here while they search for the Crown Prince and their Last Princess. The Cosmonaut Dogs have asked you to reclaim their home in the First Capsule, and suggested that the Men of Black and White may have the Key to the Foglands you seek.*

## Challenge and Consequence

The Cards will include a base recommended difficulty Level. As Storyteller, you choose how much to add to that difficulty (or potentially remove) for each scene based upon the previous events of the story and the notes provided here for the scene itself. Once you have decided on what the difficulty score should be, write down that number and place it face down. Then tell the psychonauts into what range the difficulty falls; possible, impossible, or beyond the impossible. The card does not include a recommended consequence level, you will choose that using the recommendations here based on where you are in the Story.

**The Difficulty levels here should not be quite as high as in Act two, for the simple reason that the Psychonauts will have fewer cards and weaker auras** (and possibly even fewer team members still standing) than in Act 2. Remember that playing two cards renders a possible value of between 2 and 8 (and psychonauts are likely to hoard 4 point cards till Act 3), **in general a storyteller should keep the difficulty level between 6 and 9.** You should be planning things so that the psychonauts must be drawing on both a lead actor and supporters, as well as attempting to invoke the Deck of Fire Cards in play.

**The Consequence level, by contrast should typically be either Disastrous or Apocalyptic.** This is the finale, heroes may fall and villains may raise. A sacrifice may be required. Remember that as long as the group succeeds, every gets the prize. Psychonauts whose aura has

shattered are not gone, they have merely lost their avatar through which they would take direct action. They may still use the remaining cards in their hand, and will still share in the victory if the team succeeds.

#### Lead the Psychonauts to Action

#### **Take the Following steps to get from the Narration scripts above to the action in the Scene: The ARC Cycle**

45. The Conflict presented in the Storyteller Opening Narration
46. Explain the base difficulty ranges on the Deck of Fire Cards in play
47. Set a timer for ten minutes
48. Let psychonauts debate
49. Tell potential outcomes if plans succeed or fail. And give Challenge and Consequence Levels for each (no numbers, just the terms)
50. Timer goes off
51. Ask for the Psychonaut's plan
52. If still indecisive, ask who is the lead actor. Then ask the Lead Actor what they will do.
53. Start ARC cycle
54. Resolve ARC
55. Magician's choice on how to exit scene. Three options on how they may conclude the scene that all lead to next scene more or less

#### The ARC Cycle

Once the Psychonauts have decided on a course of action, run the ARC Cycle and resolve the conflict. Remember that only one psychonaut can be the lead actor, but any number of psychonauts can support the lead's actions. Likewise, if the actions are successful, only the lead actor recovers cards to their hand. As the ARC cycle covers a much broader segment of action than a single dice roll in a traditional RPG, the storyteller should be flexible in allowing the psychonauts to modify their plan as the ARC Cycle proceeds. The mechanics exist to serve the story, not the other way around. The Storyteller should always act to produce the best story.

If the psychonauts succeed, they will recover some cards for their hand. If the Psychonauts fail, some of them will take some damage to their auras and no cards will be recovered. Assuming that some of the psychonauts have survived, you will narrate how their actions unfolded. And, whether or not they were successful in their attempted actions, they will move closer to the final confrontation.

If they succeeded, feel free to provide some small in game benefit, or even simply provide a narration which makes them look good. If they fail, do not penalize them, they will already have suffered damage to their aura and will have lost cards without being allowed to draw new ones. Instead, if they fail, simply explain how they have been dragged by the plot closer to the story's conclusion in a manner they would not have preferred. From the plot's point of view, knocking out the guards and sneaking into the castle disguised as said guards accomplishes the same thing as being dragged into the castle in chains, but one feels very different to the psychonauts.

### Storyteller Transition Narration

Once the ARC Cycle has completed, your job as the Storyteller is to move them smoothly to the next scene. We have provided a generic transition narration below. **We recommend that you do not read the transition simply as written, but include it as part of your narration explaining how the results of the ARC Cycle unfolded as part of the story.**

*You're approaching the First Capsule in Stellar House, the home of the Cosmonaut Dogs, pursued by a Purge Team. You're deep into occupied territory, and there's no turning back now. How will you meet this challenge?*

## Scene 6 - The Confrontation

### Deck of Fire

**Set out the following cards from the Deck of Fire onto the Story Progression Sheet:**

- **Mythos:** Brewmaster Bobby Indra
- **Scenario:** The MacGuffin is Missing!
- **Major Challenge:** The Purifiers, Purge Team
- **Minor Challenge:** Ghost Lotus, The Bloom
- **Major Setting:** Stellar House
- **Minor Setting:** The First Capsule

### Storyteller Opening Narration

**Start the Scene by reading (or paraphrasing) the following:**

*Off to the side of the Atrium, through a heavy door, is the first capsule. Looking like an Gemini command module interpreted by Soviet state concept artists, the capsule gleams with 1950s glamour and a proud hammer and sickle decal on the metal skin of the capsule.*

*The Purge Team is still on the Hunt, and since the capsule is not inside Stellare House proper, Ghost Lotus blooms have drifted over from the Maze. No pressure.*

## Stage Direction

**The Purifier Purge Team is the Major Challenge.** If the psychonauts dealt lethally with them last time, feel free to use the reinforcements trick.

**The Minor Challenge are the Ghost Lotus**, and these should be familiar to the psychonauts by now. And with luck, they will even have practise using them against the Men of Black and White.

**The scene takes place just outside the First Capsule**, and the Psychonauts may well hide in it. Remember that the capsule is a tesseract and larger on the inside than the outside

*This is the Cosmonaut Dog's home, the First Capsule. The Purifiers have you surrounded, and a few ghost lotus have drifted in as their bloom spreads. If the Key to the Foglands isn't here, you're out of leads and out of options. How will you end this?*

## Challenge and Consequence

The Cards will include a base recommended difficulty Level. As Storyteller, you choose how much to add to that difficulty (or potentially remove) for each scene based upon the previous events of the story and the notes provided here for the scene itself. Once you have decided on what the difficulty score should be, write down that number and place it face down. Then tell the psychonauts into what range the difficulty falls; possible, impossible, or beyond the impossible. The card does not include a recommended consequence level, you will choose that using the recommendations here based on where you are in the Story.

**The Difficulty levels here should not be quite as high as in Act two, for the simple reason that the Psychonauts will have fewer cards and weaker auras** (and possibly even fewer team members still standing) than in Act 2. Remember that playing two cards renders a possible value of between 2 and 8 (and psychonauts are likely to hoard 4 point cards till Act 3), **in general a storyteller should keep the difficulty level between 6 and 9**. You should be planning things so that the psychonauts must be drawing on both a lead actor and supporters, as well as attempting to invoke the Deck of Fire Cards in play. **However, be sure to remind the psychonauts of the deck of fire cards in play and use ALL the cards they do not invoke against them,**

**The Consequence level should Apocalyptic for the Confrontation.** This is where everyone ends for the Session, no point in being nice here- the psychonauts play without a net for the final scene.

A sacrifice may be required. Remember that as long as the group succeeds, every gets the prize. Psychonauts whose aura has shattered are not gone, they have merely lost their avatar through which they would take direct action. They may still use the remaining cards in their hand, and will still share in the victory if the team succeeds.

Lead the Psychonauts to Action

**Take the Following steps to get from the Narration scripts above to the action in the Scene: The ARC Cycle**

56. The Conflict presented in the Storyteller Opening Narration
57. Explain the base difficulty ranges on the Deck of Fire Cards in play
58. Set a timer for ten minutes
59. Let psychonauts debate
60. Tell potential outcomes if plans succeed or fail. And give Challenge and Consequence Levels for each (no numbers, just the terms)
61. Timer goes off
62. Ask for the Psychonaut's plan
63. If still indecisive, ask who is the lead actor. Then ask the Lead Actor what they will do.
64. Start ARC cycle
65. Resolve ARC
66. Magician's choice on how to exit scene. Three options on how they may conclude the scene that all lead to next scene more or less

The ARC Cycle

Once the Psychonauts have decided on a course of action, run the ARC Cycle and resolve the conflict. Remember that only one psychonaut can be the lead actor, but any number of psychonauts can support the lead's actions. Likewise, if the actions are successful, only the lead actor recovers cards to their hand. As the ARC cycle covers a much broader segment of action than a single dice roll in a traditional RPG, the storyteller should be flexible in allowing the psychonauts to modify their plan as the ARC Cycle proceeds. The mechanics exist to serve the story, not the other way around. The Storyteller should always act to produce the best story.

If the psychonauts succeed, they will recover some cards for their hand. If the Psychonauts fail, some of them will take some damage to their auras and no cards will be recovered. Assuming that some of the psychonauts have survived, you will narrate how their actions unfolded. And, whether or not they were successful in their attempted actions, they will move closer to the final confrontation.

If they succeeded, feel free to provide some small in game benefit, or even simply provide a narration which makes them look good. If they fail, do not penalize them, they will already have suffered damage to their aura and will have lost cards without being allowed to draw new ones. Instead, if they fail, simply explain how they have been dragged by the plot closer to the story's conclusion in a manner they would not have preferred. From the plot's point of view, knocking out the guards and sneaking into the castle disguised as said guards accomplishes the same thing as being dragged into the castle in chains, but one feels very different to the psychonauts.

### Storyteller Transition Narration

Once the ARC Cycle has completed, your job as the Storyteller is to move them smoothly to the next scene. We have provided a generic transition narration below. **We recommend that you do not read the transition simply as written, but include it as part of your narration explaining how the results of the ARC Cycle unfolded as part of the story.**

*You've found the Flask of Bobby Indra. The Dogs remember his Incursion team finding the Key. But the Dogs recall seeing Bobby in the RIng as an echonaut, a ghostly shadow of a Psychonaut whose Aura shattered. And so he is your only lead. Next time, you seek Bobby Indra, answers, and the Key to the Foglands!*



## Resolution

The key to finishing the Session is to end on both a cliff hanger while also giving a sense of closure. The Psychonauts need to feel as though the simple little mission they started has ballooned into a much large quest.

Give them the gratitude of the Cosmonaut Dogs, because they will almost certainly have liberated the Cosmonaut Dogs' home for them. Glve them the reveal of a solid tangible clue in the flask, and have the Dogs give them the reward of new and useful information.

But then cut them short as they start to brainstorm and plan their next move. Tell them that all shall be revealed (or not) in THE NEXT CHAPTER! Or episode, or session, or whatever method suits your style.

And remember to add your notes to the Campaign Book so the next Storyteller can remember the big moments, especially the ones that moved the story along.

## Wrap Up

The wrap up is pretty straight forward, but don't skip it. Particularly if you are over thirty years old. People will be astonished at how hard adults find coordinating social time. Fill out the campaign book, or nobody will remember what happened when next you play. Arrange the next session, or it will be six months before anyone remembers to do so. And clean up, because otherwise the Storyteller will be stuck doing it alone and nobody will want to be the Storyteller.

### Fill out the Campaign Book

- Synopsis of Session - even just point form
  - Three sentence summary of events
  - Enemies and Allies made
    - New Characters Encountered

- Encounters with Recurring Friends and Foes
- Achievements and failures
  - New abilities and skills unlocked
  - New Tools Attuned

### Arrange Next Session

- Determine New Storyteller if not already set
- New Storyteller lists their available dates.
- Other Psychonauts list their availability compared to Storyteller's dates.
- Options are narrowed down to the three most optimal dates.
- The Team chooses the best date and confirms next session date.
- If the storyteller cannot supply the location, another location is discussed and confirmed.

### Clean Up

- Scan the Psychonaut Incursion Sheets or take photographs with your phone, before letting psychonauts take them (and lose them)
- Put the tokens away, have a dedicated container for the tokens if possible
- Hand off the Campaign Book to the New Storyteller
- Everyone cleans up the dishes etcetera.
- All done!

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